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ABSTRACT

This review of instructional materials currently used in secondary school remedial reading programs provides rating sheets for magazines, commercially published reading programs, paperback library books, specific skill sets, multimedia materials, workbooks, supplementary materials, and book sets. Each rating sheet analyzes the material's advantages and disadvantages and identifies the school districts (rich or poor, urban or rural, large or small), the educational setting (reading laboratory, traditional classroom, or small group settings), and the grade levels for which it is best suited. Each sheet also provides cost information for the material and the name and address of its publisher. (FL)

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A Review of Currently Used Secondary Remedial Reading Materials

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Materials Reviewed

1. Magazines:
   SCOPE-Scholastic Book Services
   Heath Urban Series-D.C. Heath and Company

2. Complete Reading Programs:
   ACTION Reading System-Scholastic Book Services
   Point 31-Readers Digest Publishing Company
   Interaction-Houghton-Mifflin Publishing Company

3. Paperback Library Books:
   PAL Paperbacks-Xerox Educational Publications

4. Specific Skill Sets:
   Reading Attainment Series (RAS)-Grolier Publishing Company
   Tactics in Reading-Scott, Foresman, and Company
   Spelling Laboratory IIIa-SRA Publishing Company
   McGraw-Hill Basic Skills System-McGraw-Hill Publishing Company

5. Multi-Media Materials:
   Book Bags-Educational Reading Company
   Advanced Clues-Educational Progress Company

6. Workbook Type Materials:
   SCOPE/Skills Books-Scholastic Book Services
   Succeed in Spelling-J. Weston-Walch
   Essential Skills Series-Jamestown Publishers
   Reading Spelling Vocabulary Punctuation (RSVP)-Amsco School Pub.

7. Supplementary Materials:
   SCOPE/Activity Kits-Scholastic Book Services
   Bowmar Gold Cup Reading Games-Bowmar Publishing Company

8. Sets of Books:
   Real Stories Series-Globe Publishing Company
   Open-Ended Stories and Plays-Globe Publishing Company
   Myths Series-Globe Publishing Company
   The Tempo Series-Macmillan Publishing Company

RATING SHEET

Advanced Clues
Educational Progress Company
Clues (Trays 1,2,3)-$325.00, Advanced Clues (Trays 4,5)-$228.00,
Clue Magazine 1,2,3-99¢, Clue Magazine 4, 5-$1.25

I. Advantages-strong points:

This material consists of two magazines and two trays of tapes which are designed as a continuation of the series Clues to Reading Progress. I have listed the cost of both programs above. This program is suposedly planned to build the students' semantic and syntactic knowledge on their foundation of personal experience. They are shown how to use these experiences to master reading strategies for approaching print. Material is presented on the tapes before they read the passage in the magazines. Questions following the reading are designed to reinforce the transfer of the strategy. Advanced Clues states its goal as an "attempt to pinpoint the elementary-school skill deficiencies of older students, and to help each student acquire the comprehension skills she or he lacks." A Teacher's Guide and a Teacher Orientation Tape are provided as well as a sequence chart. A diagnostic component is provided also and includes a pre and post test. Record keeping is covered with the Criterion Test Score Chart. This material is attractive and well designed. The lessons are interesting and students seem to like the program and the teaching stragety. The program is completely individualized and Advanced Clues deals with the following skills: contextual word analysis, sentence analysis, whole-paragraph analysis, article analysis, pattern analysis in content areas, analysis beyond the printed page, and multiple-source analysis. The format of each magazine is specifically designed with interesting art work and stories to accomplish the task of stimulating the student's interest. Advanced Clues is written at the 3.0-6.0 grade level.

II. Disadvantages-weak points:

The price of this material is almost unbelievable. It would be difficult for most districts to justify spending over $500 to implement this program. The Advanced Clues alone would cost over $200. Most teachers who use this material feel that it works no better or worse than materials which are similar and cost less. The novelty of the program soon wears off, and it becomes impossible to use it in small groups.

III. Best Suited for:

This material is best suited for a rich or Federally funded district. The reading program should be looking for a different approach to tedious basal word attack and comprehension programs. This material is well suited for a reading laboratory or learning center.

RATING SHEET

Book Bags
Educational Reading Service
Prices vary: White Fang-$6.90, Sounder-$9.20, Huckleberry Finn (includes 8 books)-$31.10, Autobiography of Jane Pittman-$17.20, more titles available

I. Advantages-strong points:

These materials provide a unique, and,for most students, exciting method of practicing reading skills. The listen-read concept is not new, but only recently have publishers begun offering cassettes and books together in a package. These materials provide cassettes for the stories and a number of copies of the paperback book. This number varies with the price and title offered. Many classics are offered as well as popular fiction and Newbery Award winners. This material offers an excellent motivational device for remedial readers. Most students cannot resist the chance to use the cassette player or the chance to be read to. These cassette-book combinations give the reading teacher a chance to individualize without having to go to a great deal of trouble to prepare the material herself. The recording quality is good, and students usually find the material and its presentation interesting.

II. Disadvantages-weak points:

Some of the cassette recordings are cut versions of the book and do not follow the book which comes with the Book Bag. Others are dramatizations of the books in a reduced or changed format. The teacher must be careful to read the ERS catalogue carefully before purchasing; sometimes they do not note which titles are cut versions. The paperback books provided with the Book Bag are of rather poor quality and wil not last the life of the cassette. Titles are limited and many of the more popular fiction titles of recent years are not included. Of course, this material requires a player to use.

III. Best suited for:

The best use of this material would be with junior and senior high school remedial readers. A school with a limited budget could purchase a few of the Book Bags as motivational devices; a school with more money would do well to establish a library. The material does provide motivation for low ability students, and does provide the student with the chance to make sound/word correlations. Remedial readers who learn best using the audio mode will benefit greatly from these materials. These are a good buy for a school that wants to begin individualizing.

RATING SHEET

Essential Skills Series
Jamestown Publishers
$1.80 per booklet

I. Advantages-strong points:

This material consists of twenty booklets on ten levels for developing the six essential categories of comprehension. The categories of comprehension are those formulated by the author, Walter Pauk, Cornell University. Each booklet contains 25 passages on a single grade level. Following each passage, there are six questions. The questions always fall into the six categories: 1) subject matter, 2) main idea, 3) supporting details, 4) conclusions, 5) clarifying devices, and 6) vocabulary in context. The booklets are arranged on ten reading levels ranging from grade 3 to grade 12. There are two booklets available for each grade level. Each booklet also contains an introduction, a lesson, an answer key, and diagnostic chart. They are designed in an attractive manner with very clean layout. The author seems to have made a sincere attempt to select material at the appropriate reading and interest level.

II. Disadvantages-weak points:

Placement for beginning in the booklets must be made by the teacher on information gained previously from other measures as the publisher offers none of their own. This material repeats previously published material by the same author and publisher. This set of booklets seems to be an expansion and rehash of Pauk's Six-Way Paragraphs, 100 passages for developing the six essential categories of comprehension. There is a great deal of material of this type on the market today. It is questionable whether we need another set of books dealing with these skills. However, for variety they may have some use.

III. Best Suited for:

This set of booklets is best suited for high school and junior college remedial readers as supplementary material. If your students scream at the sight of SRA materials, this might be an alternative. The booklet format is change from SRA and the content is somewhat new. I would recommend a few copies of the lower grade level booklets for any reading lab.

RATING SHEET

Gold Cup Reading Games
Bowmar Publishing
$13.00 each, set of 3 is $39.00

I. Advantages-strong points:

This set of materials consists of three reading games: Horse Trail Ride, 3.5 reading level; Motorcycle Moto Cross, 4.0 reading level; and Dune Buggy Rally, 3.5 reading level. Each game, which can be played by 2 to 6 students, includes a 36" x 23" bright-colored playing board, one die, six die-cut playing pieces, 40 playing cards, a student glossary, and playing instructions, along with a brief teacher's instruction sheet with suggestions for extended activities. The games are designed to reinforce reading, mathematics, and language arts skills through game-play. The games give students a chance to practice vocabulary building and word recognition, understanding sequence, and comprehending instructions. The vocabulary of each game is that of the actual sport. Students "ride" motorcycles, dune buggies, or horses in true-to-life competition. The format is extremely appealing to high school students.

II. Disadvantages-weak points:

These games are extremely popular in the classroom and many students will play them to the exclusion of doing any other reading work if allowed. The skills they try to develop are important but the games provide a very limited approach and amount of material. The activities in each game are similar. If you've played one, you've played them all! The rules and glossary are printed on the inside cover of the box. Unless directed to do so it is very easy for students to miss reading or using them. The teacher's guide and suggestion for extended activities is a joke to any experienced teacher.

III. Best suited for:

Junior and senior high school reading classrooms. The games are fairly priced and reasonably sturdy. They are such good motivators of reluctant readers, I don't see how any reading lab could survive without them. However, they have limited use, and if that use is abused, they are a waste of money. It is easy for students "to burn out" on these games if they are allowed to play too often. I use them as motivators, rewards for good work, and as free day activities.

RATING SHEET

Heath Urban Series
D.C. Heath and Company
Level 7-$99.00, Level 8-$99.00

I. Advantages-strong points:

This materials set consists of large format magazine/newspaper reading materials and phonograph records. Each kit contains twenty different stories. The format is good and appeals to most students. The stories are presented with a tabloid appearance using large print, lots of dialogue, and large black and white pictures. A picture accompanies each story. A teacher's manual gives synopsis of the short story with questions generally in reference to character development to be asked before and after the stories have been read. Most of the stories have an urban setting related to junior high age interest with reading difficulty at the fourth to sixth grade level. The cost is relatively low, and this highly flexible set of materials could be preserved easily with plastic lamination. They could be used either individually or with small groups.

II. Disadvantages-weak points:

The urban setting of the stories becomes a disadvantage itself when used in suburban, white middle class schools. This defect limits the use of the materials to large, metropolitan areas. However, that is where it was designed to be used. There are no tests for student feedback. No progress charts are provided for keeping students' records. The kit is not a skill builder; no reading skill is stressed. The materials must be preserved in some manner or they would not last the semester in most reading classrooms. A phonograph record player and a filmstrip projector are needed to use the kit effectively.

III. Best Suited for:

The Heath Urban Series materials are best suited for junior high or secondary school use for students who live in an urban setting. The kit could be used in a structured, traditional classroom; however, for best results it should be used as good supplemental reading material to create high interest for reluctant readers. This material was published five years ago and it is not clear if any of the contents have been updated or added to.

Rating Sheet

Interaction: A Student-Centered Language Arts and Reading Program
Houghton-Mifflin
Level 3 (Grades 7-12)-$854.58, Literacy Kit-$583.35

I. Advantages-strong points

James Moffett, author of this series, believes that all language arts, reading, writing, speaking, listening, and acting out, should be studied together, reinforcing each other. He has integrated this approach into a completely individualized language arts program which relies on two main types of components: 1) a classroom library of many paperbacks having six copies of each title, and 2) activity cards bearing directions for all language arts and reading activities and written directly to students so that they may choose and follow them out as autonomously as possible. Reading is taught through the supplemental Literacy Kit which stresses decoding at the beginning level with an intensive program of sound-spelling correspondences through the use of a variety of games, animated films and non-book materials. In addition, a selection of colorful booklets (fiction, nonfiction, limericks, epigrams, jokes, etc.) are available from which pupils can make selections for individual silent reading and for reading aloud to classmates in small groups. Many selections have matching cassettes in the Listening Library. After the booklets have been mastered the student is expected to make gains in comprehension by acting out scenes, discussing attitudes, or carrying out directions in the booklets or in the 700 or so activity cards. This is not supplementary material; it is a comprehensive non-sequential program for secondary language arts students which would replace traditional elective courses. In-service training films for the materials are available for rental. The publisher has provided a chart for language arts skills development in the Interaction Series.

II. Disadvantages-weak points

You should see the program in action to fully understand it. Also, its approach is controversial, especially among parents of low ability secondary students. The reading theories and practices employed in the Literacy Kit may not be to the liking of you or your faculty or parents since it is non sequential and not traditional in approach. Perhaps the biggest drawback is its cost! However, it should be noted that it replaces all other expenses for books and supplementary materials. It is recommended by this writer that the entire program be purchased for a fair evaluation; I don't see how it could work with some components missing. Traditional teachers may not like this program as it does cast the teacher in a different role than normal.

III. Best suited for:

A secondary or junior high school with poorly motivated students would be an ideal situation for this program; it would probably be best suited for average ability students. A school would need a big budget or an NDEA project to finance the purchase of the Interaction Series. I would recommend introduction of the materials to half of a freshman class for one year; then the faculty could see if they wanted to implement the program for the entire department. Personally, I like the materials and approach very much. I am not familiar with the Literacy Kit, but I question how effectively remedial readers will grow in this program.

Level 3 Complete Set -6 copies of each pupil booklet exclusive of mature versions as listed under Nonconsumable Booklets below, 10 copies each Consumable Booklet, 1 set of Punctuation Cassettes, 1 set of Activity Cards, 1 complete set of Listening Library Cassettes with accompanying Teacher's Guide, 1 Talk and Take Game, 1 Card Game Set Set, 1 Silly Syntax Set, Photo Stories Green, 1 set of 30 Tracing Charts, 1 set of 30 Experience Charts, and a Level 3 Teacher's Guide.....$854.58

Literacy Kit Complete-Sound Out Films, Sound Out Teacher's Guide, 6 copies of First Stories, 6 copies of Nonsense, Films and Books Activity Cards, 1 set of Stamps and Handy Letters, 1 Bingo Set Complete, 1 set of Board Games and Card Games, 1 Cast-a-Spell, 1 set of Using Language Activity Cards, 1 set of Make and Play Activity Cards,1 set of Word Turning Activity Cards,1 set of Handwriting Activity Cards, 10 copies of Nutty Stuff 1,2. 3, 4, and This is the Pad that Pat Has, 10 copies of Punctuation Booklet Cassette for Nonsense and First Stories, 30 Literacy Kit Tracking Charts and 1 Literacy Kit Teacher's Guide.....$583.35

RATING SHEET

The Magnificient Myths of Man, Legends for Everyone
Globe Publishing Company
$3.00 per book

I. Advantages-strong points:

These two books provide the remedial reading student with the opportunity to obtain a background in mythology, a subject usually taught to average and above average English classes only. The books are beautifully designed and illustrated on a limited budget. The photography, art work, and book design are excellent , obviously done with the remedial student in mind. The Magnificient Myths of Man is written at 4.3-5.5 grade level for junior and senior high school students. There are 29 myths presented from different lands and different ages. Some of the heroes covered are: Anansi (Ghana), Quetzalcoatl (Mexico), Siegfried (Germany), and Beowulf (England). Study guide questions follow each myth and stress comprehension skills. Legends for Everyone is a collection of 24 tales from the American past for the very slow reader, 2-3 grade level. The stories are organized by region and represent many different historical periods, different types of legends, and different groups of people. Comprehension, vocabulary, and writing activities follow each story.

II. Disadvantages-weak points:

There are no real disadvantages to these materials.

III. Best Suited for:

These two books, and two others published by the same company, are best suited for the reading teacher who wants to provide students with a background in mythology similar to other English students. Students enjoy this type of material and its use is especially appropriate at the ninth grade level. The materials also provide the teacher an opportunity to give students a multi-cultural reading experience at a reading level they can deal with. The content is something new for remedial reading classes, and it is refreshing to find a publisher who attempts to deal with classical and traditional subject matter for the remedial reader. These books would be best suited for small group reading experiences.

RATING SHEET

McGraw-Hill Basic Skills Series
McGraw-Hill Publishing Company
$275.00 for entire set

I. Advantages-strong points:

This set of materials, a group of 21 books, 12 tapes, and sets of post and pre-tests, are designed for college bound and college students. This program would be of great help to a teacher in junior college, probably a remedial reading/skills center teacher, who is faced with the tremendous diversity in educational background among young people entering college today. With the lowering of college entrance requirements and special category admissions, material like this is needed. The program is designed to assist these students and takes into account that no two students are deficient in the same skills to the same degree. The BSS provides individualized instruction along with diagnosis of each student's weakness, teaches the skills necessary to overcome the deficiencies, and evaluates the student's progress. The materials cover reading, math, vocabulary, spelling, writing, study skills; the six basic skills most needed by entering college freshmen. The diagnostic tests are quite good and are self-correcting so the student can evaluate his weak areas and plan a program of study using the books and tapes. The tests identify sub-skill areas for study. The format of the BSS allows the teacher to manipulate the learning and testing variables with considerable latitude.

II. Disadvantages-weak points:

Cost! The entire set sells for $275.00 which is an amount that could only be justified if they were used in a remedial center. The materials are designed in a very spartan manner, no color, illustrations, etc. Perhaps the worst thing about the BSS is that it presumes the student has a reading level of tenth grade; this is a ludicrous assumption if you have ever worked with junior college freshmen. Many students could score so low on the pre-tests that they could not use the material. Therefore, the materials are very limited in application. Because of the design of the BSS, graphically and intellectually, even students who do read at the tenth grade level would have to be motivated, very motivated, to remediate their weak areas. The content is drawn from college academic disciplines, evidently from textbooks. The approach is very standard and commonplace; however, it seems to be based on traditional remedial tenents. In summation, the materials are just too sophisticated for use by most remedial students.

III. Best suited for:

The BSS is best suited for highly motivated students who are college bound, have been admitted to a junior college or a four year college on an open-door policy who have minor problems in

2 - BSS

any of the six skill areas. It would be best be used under the guidance of a remedial teacher in a remedial skills center. The materials are definitely developmental and presume a high reading level.

RATING SHEET

Open-Ended Stories, Open-Ended Plays
Globe Publishing Company
$2.25 each

I. Advantages-strong points

These two books offer a unique and fun experience for the remedial reading student. Both texts provide situations, plays, or short stories which do not have endings. The class or individual student must provide them. The type of practice offered is excellent for building comprehension skills, creative writing skills, oral and written expression. The books begin with a chart which classifies each play and story according to themes dealt with. There are black and white drawings done with taste and extreme sensitivity to subject matter. At the end of each book are study guide questions for the plays and stories. The topics covered offer a large variety of real life teenage problem situations. These are excellent supplemental materials for the remedial teaching situation. Reading level of Open-Ended Plays is 3-4; reading level of Open-Ended Stories is 4-5. Teacher's Guides are available at no cost.

II. Disadvantages-weak points:

There are no real disadvantages to these supplemental materials.

III. Best Suited for:

These books are best suited for the secondary remedial reading lab or classroom with a limited budget. A few copies of each title could form the basis of a weekly lesson for an entire semester. The teacher who is short on creativity and wants to add interest to the reading classroom would benefit greatly from these books. I would recommend five or ten copies for each reading teacher. These books are especially good also for the teacher who is new to teaching or the teaching of reading as so much is done for the teacher. It would be difficult to use one of these plays or stories for a lesson and have it fail.

RATING SHEET

PAL Paperback Program
Xerox Educational Publications
PAL Kit A-$35.99, PAL Kit B-$36.99

I. Advantages-strong points:

These two kits of paperback books are a best bargain for the price. There are 54 books in each kit; this is about 66¢ a book. Kit A contains books at reading levels 1.5 to 3.5, Kit B contains books from 3.5-5.5. The books are written about topics teenagers can relate to. The books, although inexpensively produced, do not look like remedial readers. Topics include mystery, the supernatural, jokes and cartoons, science fiction, teen-boy and teen-girl problems, car and cycle adventures. Books are classified within each Kit into two reading levels by use of a color code on the cover. This makes it easy for the teacher to identify a book at the desired level easily and quickly. Each Kit also contains a motivational poster and Teacher's Guide.

II. Disadvantages-weak points:

There are no real disadvantages to these books. The only weak point is that they are very popular and are used at the junior high and intermediate grade levels. There are no read/listen cassettes available for these paperbacks.

III. Best Suited for:

These are excellent supplemental materials for a secondary reading class. They allow the remedial reader to maintain self-respect by reading material at his grade level with mature content. A school searching for an inexpensive way to expand classroom libraries or providing high interest books for the reading laboratory should consider buying the PAL Paperback Program.

RATING SHEET

Point 31-Corrective Reading Center
Reader's Digest
Instructional Levels 0-4.9-$367.50, Includes Reading 1 Lab., Reading 2 Lab., Reading 3 Lab., plus the Point 31 Evaluation Program booklet. Each Lab. contains the following: 20 magazines, (10 each of two different readers), 20 Activity Books, one Activity Book-Teacher's Edition, 12 audio lesson (on six cassettes), one Point 31 Teacher's Guide.

I. Advantages-strong points:

This is a new publication from an old reliable company. It was created for secondary and middle school students who cannot read or who stumble along four or five more grades below level and for teachers who are looking for a comprehensive program that promises progress in basic reading skills. There are four levels to the program: Decoding, 0.-1.9; Reading Level 1, 1.5-2.9; Reading Level 2, 2.5-3.9; and Reading Level 3, 3.5-4.9. The program emphasizes decoding skills stating that most decoding programs are too juvenile for secondary students. This program provides high interest material at it promises. The program consists of a series of reading lessons on reading skills, word attack, decoding, phonics, etc., presented in the Activity Books, audio lessons which must be used with the initial decoding instruction at the Decoding Level, and at other Levels contain read-along lessons, interviews, and pattern lessons which provide skits as an instructional device. The magazine readers present high interest reading materials with a controlled vocabulary which introduces new words and word patterns. The materials come with a progress chart for each student provided on a duplicating master, an excellent Teacher's Guide, an excellent list of objectives, specific, and a list of how they are accomplished by the material. Point 31 also provides a pre-test and a post post-test in the evaluation component. An excellent scope and sequence chart is provided in the Teacher's Guide.

II. Disadvantages-weak points:

There are no real disadvantages to this program outside of its cost. You can do the same thing more cheaply by putting together this type of material from several sources. Some may object to the teaching of decoding skills to secondary students regardless of their reading level. The material relies on traditional phonics rules, and one can argue their usefulness forever without a conclusion. No new or innovative methods are used to teach reading in this program.

III. Best Suited for:

Secondary and junior high remedial readers would benefit most from this program. I think it would be especially good to use with foreign born students. The program can be implemented at any Level, thereby reducing the cost considerably. For instance, Level 1 Lab. sells for $96.00. I have seen this material used with white middle class students and was impressed with it. I think it would be a good thing to try in urban populations. It would be especially good for an inexperienced reading teacher or someone who just had the reading program dropped on them. This program would be especially good if you had lots of money and wanted to try something new.

Rating Sheet

Reading Attainment Series
Grolier Educational Corporation
System 1: 3-4 reading level-$120.50, System 2: 5-6 reading level-$120.50

I. Advantages-strong points:

This set of materials consists of a series of graded reading exercises with comprehension questions. In format, it is almost identical to the Power Builders published by SRA. The topics in this program are highly appealing and the format includes the same activities after each reading selection. Secondary students find the reading topics attractive and relevant and know exactly what is expected of them after reading each selection. Each student keeps a progress graph; when he feels confident enough, he moves to a higher level. It is recommended that a student begin at a level easier than he can handle to avoid frustration. Students who enjoy reading with a minimum amount of contact with the teacher find this program to be just what they are looking for. The kit is well suited for individualized instruction in its format and high interest content. There are two kits available: Kit I-Reading Level 2-4.5, Kit II-Reading Level 4.5-6.0.

II. Disadvantages-weak points

The main weakness of the program is that it does not have a diagnostic section. If the reading teacher is not familiar with the RAS selections and if the teacher has no previous information on the student, placement would be difficult. The program also does not specify how to measure student progress; and there is a vagueness about when a student should move on to other levels. It seems to be subjective on the part of the teacher.

III. Best suited for:

The program is best suited for junior and senior high school students with low interest and low reading ability. The selections seem to be classified accurately according to grade level. The program is well suited to help develop comprehension in a program which includes other more structured approaches to word attack and skill development. I would never recommend it to be used exclusively, but it would be an asset as supplementary material in any remedial reading teaching situation.

RATING SHEET

Real Stories Series
Globe Publishing Company
Book A-$2.70, Book 1-$2.82, Book 2-$2.94, Cassettes for Real Stories: Set A-$55.00, Set B-$55.00.

I. Advantages-strong points:

The selections in Real Stories books are news stories and articles from newspapers which have been rewritten on a controlled reading level, 3-6. The authors have attempted to preserve the journalistic flavor of the original stories. Each short story is the nucleus of a complete reading lesson. Following each story is a battery of exercises in vocabulary, comprehension, reasoning and inference. Every sixth lesson is a review lesson, and cumulative reviews appear in the middle and at the end of each text. Headlines are printed in a newspaper style, and drawings illustrate the stories. Students are attracted to this material because the stories are real, and the selections are kept quite short. The formula style of writing used in news stories is easy to follow. The selections provide a good 20 minute reading activity. The Cassette Workshop which accompanies the books consists of two sets of six tapes. Side 1 of each tape provides a dramatization of one of the stories in the text, a reading of the story, the exercises from the textbook, and new exercises. The tapes are intended for learning, not testing. Side 2 offers instruction in basic word attack skills, with emphasis on phonics. Study sheets on spirit masters are boxed with the tapes. The tapes provide a chance for the reading teacher to individualize the use of Real Stories.

II. Disadvantages-weak points:

There is little variation in these two books. Although it is comforting to know what to expect it can become boring. Other than this repetitiveness, there are no real disadvantages.

III. Best Suited for:

The two books are best suited for a reading lab or classroom at the secondary or junior high school level. Any school could afford these materials since it is the feeling of this writer that they are best used with small groups or individuals. Students who don't like fiction and protest that they see no reason to read stories which are not real will respond well to these books.

RATING SHEET

R.S.V.P. (Reading Spelling Vocabulary Punctuation)
Amsco School Publication
$1.45 per book

I. Advantages-strong points:

This material consists of workbooks which present five vocabulary words in a variety of contexts, including a reading selection, true and false comprehension questions, matching of definitions, word derivitive study, using the context exercise, substitution of one vocabulary word for a phrase, and a review test. This format provides ample practice and reinforcement of learning as well as built in performance objectives. The program is appropriate for individual, small group or total class instruction. It seems especially good for the student who likes the security of knowing exactly what is expected of him in each self-contained lesson. The highly repetitive format of this approach to spelling and vocabulary development is ideal for the student who likes to work on his own with immediate feedback provided by the teacher.

II. Disadvantages-weak points:

The reading selections in the workbooks are not of particularly high interest; there is no attempt at bicultural orientation, nor is the appearance of the workbooks particularly attractive. The learning approach is strictly a sight modality with the same format repeated over and over again with no provision for an alternative mode of instruction if the student should fail through this method. There is also little opportunity for innovation when using these materials. Also, the vocabulary to be learned appears to be randomly selected; there is no obvious pattern to the selections, nor is there any real sequencing of skills. For some students this repetitious format could prove to be tedious.

III. Best Suited for:

This program is best suited for the student who needs a great deal of work in vocabulary development and who works best in a tightly organized repetitious system. This program should not be used exclusively for word attack skills. It is more of a vocabulary practice approach than a total reading program. It would be a good supplemental exercise for the compulsive worker who likes security and is not particularly concerned about high interest content.

RATING SHEET

Scholastic's ACTION Reading System
Scholastic Book Services
ACTION Unit-$129.50, DOUBLE ACTION-$139.50, ACTION Libraries-$39.50 each, ACTION Word Attack Skills Supplement-$12.50, DOUBLE ACTION Word Attack Skills Supplement-$12.50.

I. Advantages-strong points:

These materials are two comprehensive reading programs which take a year each to teach. ACTION is an intensive structured unit for secondary students whose skills and vocabulary levels are between 2.0 and 4.0. ACTION develops basic word attack and reading comprehension skills through reading, role-playing, discussion and writing. DOUBLE ACTION provides a parallel set of materials at 3.0 to 5.0 reading level. DOUBLE ACTION is specifically designed for below-grade students who are able to start reading at 3.0 whether or not they already have worked their way through the ACTION unit. The two units employ records for pre-reading motivation, posters for the same goal, Unit Books with short stories of a high interest nature and Play Books for oral or group reading. Specific skill work is done in the Unit Books before and after the short story reading. The content of these materials is outstanding. Scholastic must have a set of geniuses working for them as they consistently produce the best in high interest, topical low level materials. The ACTION libraries which accompany these two units are also outstanding. The layout and large print are good and clear. The Teaching Guide is one of the best I've seen and is well worth the cost. Students like these materials and they are some of the most popular and successful on the market today. Scope and sequence charts are included.

II. Disadvantages-weak points:

Scholastic materials are used by junior hgh schools a great deal. Before purchasing ACTION or DOUBLE ACTION, check with the junior high's in your area to see if they use them. If they do, stay away from them. Scholastic publishes other good materials. There are really no other major advantages to the materials. However, they do not provide a pre or post-test.

III. Best Suited for:

Secondary remedial reading students are the best audience for these materials. The programs are quite flexible and can be used with a traditional classroom setup or individually. I think they are used best with small groups of students. Although I don't like to emphasize oral reading, these materials do stimulate, through the use of the plays, a desire from students to read orally. The cost is very low considering the amount of material you get for the price. I would recommend these materials for a

beginning or experienced secondary remedial reading teacher with students who are difficult to motivate.

RATING SHEET

SCOPE/Activity Kit
Scholastic Book Services
$29.95

I. Advantages-strong points:

These materials are short, thematic units designed for flexible use with small groups. Each Kit is written at fourth to sixth grade level for use with secondary students. The Kits can be used for a few days, a week, or over an extended period of time or for a two to three week unit of study. Materials included are fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and open-ended situations, all designed to improve and expand reading skills. Each Kit contains thirty copies of a thematic 32 page illustrated student booklet, six ditto masters of related games and exercises for reinforcement of basic skills, and a Teaching Guide with flexible teaching suggestions. Some also include records. The Kits are well designed and graphically sophisticated like all Scholastic materials. The content is excellent and is written to the student at a high interest/low ability level. Subjects include: Advertising, Television, Radio, The News, Mystery, Frauds and Hoaxes, Sports, Who Am I?, and Love.

II. Disadvantages-weak points:

Most of this material has appeared in SCOPE magazine at some time or another. It is best to review a Kit before using to decide if the students have had the material recently. Due to the low price, much of the printed material is of low quality, but this is not a major drawback. Again, junior high schools may have used these very popular materials ahead of you, so check.

III. Best Suited for:

This material is best suited for senior high school students in a remedial reading or remedial social science class. The reading level is accurately judged at fourth to sixth and topics are truly high interest. Since the material is very flexible it is easy to use several ways. I have used these Kits with large and small groups as well as individuals with equal success.

RATING SHEET

SCOPE Magazine
Scholastic Book Services
$85 for a class set of 30

I. Advantages-strong points:

This is a weekly high interest, low ability magazine for secondary and junior high school students. The reading level is estimated at 4-6 grade. The magazine covers topics which are relevant to students and the youth culture and its values. The plays, short stories, interviews, and feature stories are realistic. There are always a variety of language activities including crossword puzzles, mini-mysteries, word power, cryptograms, etc. The magazine includes an excellent Teacher's Edition which includes study guide questions for the stories and plays as well as answers for the language activities. Every issue also includes a language activity for reproduction and regular professional features. For example, Curriculum Corner gives a different lesson plan each week for a reading class. The magazine's layout, art, and illustrations are well suited for teenage appeal. The editors have a knack for choosing the most topical and interesting subject matter. They are not afraid to deal with controversial social issues and ideas.

II. Disadvantages-weak points:

Distribution of the magazine is sometimes unreliable. The magazine is so good that unprepared and inexperienced reading teachers tend to base their entire program on it; this material is intended to be supplemental.

III. Best Suited for:

This material is best suited for low ability remedial reading classes at the junior or senior high school level. The school without much money to spend on supplemental materials would spend their money wisely on SCOPE. This material is especially good to use as a motivational tool for the uninterested student.

RATING SHEET

SCOPE/Skills Books
Scholastic Book Serivces
$1.00 per book

I. Advantages-strong points:

These materials are a series of low-cost paperback workbooks for whole class or individual use with remedial reading students. All the workbooks are written at the fourth to sixth grade reading level. These books combine open-ended situations, high interest content, extensive use of illustrations, puzzles, exercises, fiction, articles, and stories to teach reading skills. Each workbook emphasizes different skills. Wide World: This book contains 48 true stories followed by a set of questions each time. Skills taught include finding the main idea, selecting important details, and getting word meaning from context clues. Dimensions: The 48 true stories in this paperback relate to rock music, sports, history, animals, fashions, and spies. Skills covered are finding the author's purpose, identifying faulty generalizations and recognizing opposites. Spotlight: The topics covered in the 33 stories in this workbook include skydivers, firemen, women's rights, singers, and sports. Finding the main idea, finding proof, recognizing important facts, and antonyms and synonyms are among the skills covered. Chillers and Thrillers: These 25 ghost stories rely on the cloze method to teach the following skills: comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, and inference. All the workbooks are large format, 81/2 X 11. This set of books is very useful, especially in a traditional classroom where a teacher would like to try some individualization.

II. Disadvantages-weak points:

The format of this series of workbooks is highly repetitive; however, this seems to bother teachers more than students. The only other drawback is that this material is purely supplemental. Their use is limited to small groups or individuals who are in need of assistance in specific comprehension and word skills.

III. Best suited for:

The workbooks are best suited for secondary remedial reading students. Since they are written at the instructional level for most senior high school remedial readers, they can be used independently. They would be a great aid to the harried reading teacher who needs fill-in material which teaches specific skills.

RATING SHEET

Spelling Word Power Laboratory IIIa
Science Research Associates, Inc.
$92.85

I. Advantages-strong points:

This material is a multi-level, developmental spelling program. It is designed to be used with the SRA Reading Lab.; however, it can be used alone. This kit is often used with remedial students although it was designed for use with seventh and eight grade average ability students. The kit consists of a diagnostic placement test, 81 learning wheels, check tests, and student record books. After obtaining a beginning level by taking the placement test, students complete work on the appropriate learning wheels. A check test is taken and corrected by the student when the work is completed. Material on the learning wheels consists of spelling rules, syllabication, word attack, and vocabulary skills. The kit is flexible and can be used with an entire group, individually, or with small groups. Students keep track of progress in the student record books. The materials are well constructed and seem to last forever.

II. Disadvantages-weak points:

This material is very dull to use and relies heavily on phonics rules for spelling. If you believe in these rules, then the material will be good for your students. The placement test is quite long and difficult and takes some time to correct for the teacher. The format, learning wheels,is clever, but that uniqueness soon wears off. Since only one mode of instruction is used, visual, some students will not learn from these materials.

III. Best Suited for:

The material is best suited for supplementary use in a reading lab or class situation. It would be deadly to use with an entire class as suggested by the publisher. Highly motivated students use the Spelling Lab effectively, and I question whether remedial reading students have the proper motivation to use these materials. This is definately not a high interest program. I think this material is often misused by reading teachers. If you have one in your class, OK; otherwise, I would hesitate to buy one for remedial use.

RATING SHEET

Succeed in Spelling
J. Weston Walch
$5.00

I. Advantages-strong points:

This material is a spiral bound spelling workbook designed for secondary students. The publisher claims that the authors have used the latest linguistic and spelling research available. This research says that American-English orthography is not a hodge-podge of irregularly spelled words. American-English is not perfect, but it does contair a regularized system of spelling. They give an extensive set of generalizations based on three orthographic principles---position, accent and surrounding sounds. A computer was programmed to spell the 17,310 most commonly used words in terms of generalizations developed. About half of the words were spelled correctly on a basis of sound-to-letter patterns. Students who learn these generalizations should thus be able to spell about half the words they write. In addition, the findings revealed that many more words of the remaining number could be spelled correctly with a little knowledge of affixation, compounding, and word origin. Therefore, approximately 80% of all words can be spelled correctly based on the statistical findings of the authors of this text. The workbook teaches five learning behaviors to become a master speller: 1) copying, 2) proofreading, 3) rewriting, 4) memorization, and 5) automatic spelling. Each of the 123 student unit lessons begins with a brief explanation of the particular spelling problem being taught. A list of fifteen Study Words are examined through a say, hear, and spell technique. The words are then fitted into appropriate patterns. Pattern Clues aid pupils in arriving at their own spelling generalizations. Then the student compares his own Pattern Clue responses with the Spelling Pattern generalizations provided. Each lesson takes 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

II. Disadvantages-weak points:

A student would have to be highly motivated to use this workbook. This material is definitely not for low interest students; however, the concepts and lessons could be used for low ability students. There are almost no illustrations and the book has a purposely repetitive layout and design. The workbook is fairly expensive for full class use.

III. Best Suited for:

This material is best suited for an English teacher who is besieged by students or parents who complain about spelling problems. This book provides a well thought out system of teaching

spelling based on current research in linguistics. I think the program would work if the students using it were highly motivated. I would recommend this material for secondary students only and would have some reservations about its use with remedial readers.

RATING SHEET

Tactics in Reading A, B, I, II, III
Scott, Foresman & Comapny
$87.00

I. Advantages-strong points:

These materials form a comprehensive supplementary reading program for grades seven through twelve. They can be purchased as workbooks or as sets of cards. Each level begins with a diagnostic test and ends with a post test for evaluation to be used at the teacher's option. The materials are designed primarily for the average reader at each grade level. Tactics depend on intrinsic motivation in the materials and a feeling of student accomplishment to reach their goals. Exercises are brief, often less than a page, and an attempt has been made to make the material interesting to students. Most of the selections are topical and seem well chosen for the grade level. There is a system for student record keeping so that the student can chart his growth. Tactics A deals with word attack skills-context, structure, sound and dictionary as well as making inferences, finding relationships and reading carefully. This is carried through at a higher level in Tactics B. The high school materials are designed to be supplementary to the Vanguard literature series. Tactics I and II deal with comprehension, sensory images, making judgments, and reading flexibility, Tactics III is available in workbook form only and deals with sophisticated reading abilities: skimming, adjusting reading rate to purpose, etc. Although not designed as remedial tools, Tactics can be used as such if the teacher is adept at diagnosing student weaknesses and has several kits at different levels available.

II. Disadvantages-weak points:

The diagnostic tests are often too long for the purpose and do not reveal as specific information as a remedial teacher would want. The illustrations in Tactics A and B are good but are almost nonexistent in Tactics I, II, and III. The materials are sturdy but I've found that the boxes which hold them are not. One major disadvantage of the program is that it is not really self-instructing. The teacher must be around to encourage and support because the high school materials are not so interesting as to motivate a student to go through 50 cards of solid printed material alone. When you have a class of 30 working on different cards, this can be exhausting. This is a developmental program not a remedial program. Some of the cards do not work well with remedial students who usually have short attention spans.

III. Best suited for:

If you have them, use them. If you don't have them, don't buy them unless you realize their specific purpose. They are best

2 - Tactics

suited for average to above average English classrooms as supplemental skill-building tooks. You may find these available to you as a remedial reading teacher, and they can be used if you carefully review the cards and specific purpose of each one. Remember they are not really designed for a remedial clinic situation.

RATING SHEET

The Tempo Series
Macmillan Publishing Company
$2.43 per book: Changing, Off-Beat, Up From Zero, Free and Easy Speaking Out for each title-66¢

I. Advantages-strong points:

These books are large format, magazine type publications. The grade level is 3.8 for all four texts. The series employs trendy graphics and high interest content which is relevant to current student experience. The publisher has made an attempt to design material which requires a participatory experience from the students rather than a passive one. The photographs and art work are keyed to the stories and the use of color is extensive. These are some of the best magazine type approach materials I've seen on the market. Students are exposed to fiction, non-fiction, poetry as well as skills work. The work requires both oral and written assignments. There is an attempt to include material which is multi-cultural in nature. One story in Up From Zero concerns Eskimo culture while another deals with a Black family. Science fiction is included as well as stories which deal with teenage problems: the brainy girl competing with boys, family death, graduation from high school. A glossary of new words and words which may be difficult for that grade level is included at the back of each book. Speaking Out books, which include oral and written activities, accompany each book. Teacher's Guides are available for all four titles. The books are sturdy and will probably last as long as the material is topical.

II. Disadvantages-weak points:

The only real disadvantage to the Tempo Series is that it is only good as long as its material is topical. However, the price is low enough so that this not a big disadvantage. All four books are written at the same grade level. The material is good enough where the teacher could use books at several different grade levels.

III. Best Suited for:

Any secondary school looking for an inexpensive set of remedial readers,(and what school isn't?), would do well to invest in the Tempo Series. Students respond positively to this high interest/low ability material. Every reading lab or classroom should have a few of these around for free reading or small group use.